PIRANHA PRESS

HARDCORE

Alec
STEVENS

FOR MATURE READERS

ALEC preston stevens

was born in 1965 in Salvador, Brazil. His formal training includes studies at the Art Institute, the Joe Kubert School, the Art Students League, and the Don Stacy Studio (the New School). His previous work includes *The Sinners* for Piranha Press, a number of short stories for various Fantagraphics books, and illustration for the *New York Times Book Review*.

"The main characters in *Hardcore* are not supposed to be representative of the punk/hardcore/thrash movement," Alec says. "A lot of people look the part and go to shows, strictly to have a good time. The characters in this story could just as easily have been hippies, greasers, or even errant knights or musketeers. I chose to set *Hardcore* in the 1980's to make a timeless story contemporary."

Dedicated to Sid Sludge, Andy & Echo, Paul Dieter, Aaron Campbell, Randi, Berlin, Froggy, Nigel Swordfish, and Laura Gillom.

Special Thanks to Mark Nevelow.

Thanks to Dale Crain & Bhob Stewart for production design.

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HARDCORE

by Alec Stevens

A Piranha Press Publication

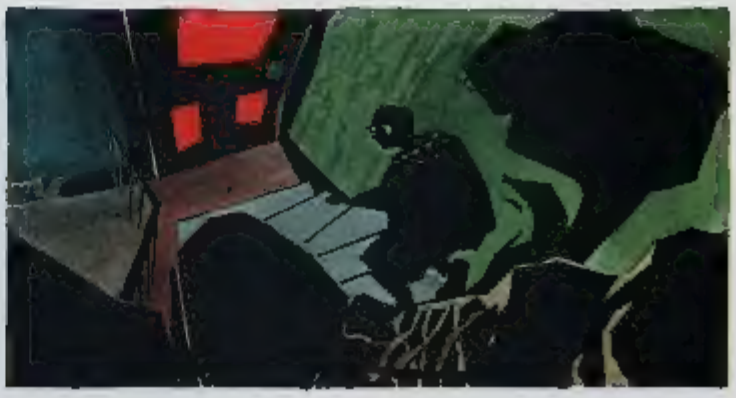
Hardcore

ALEC STEVENS 1989

OCTOBER, 1984

"C'MON, MAN!"

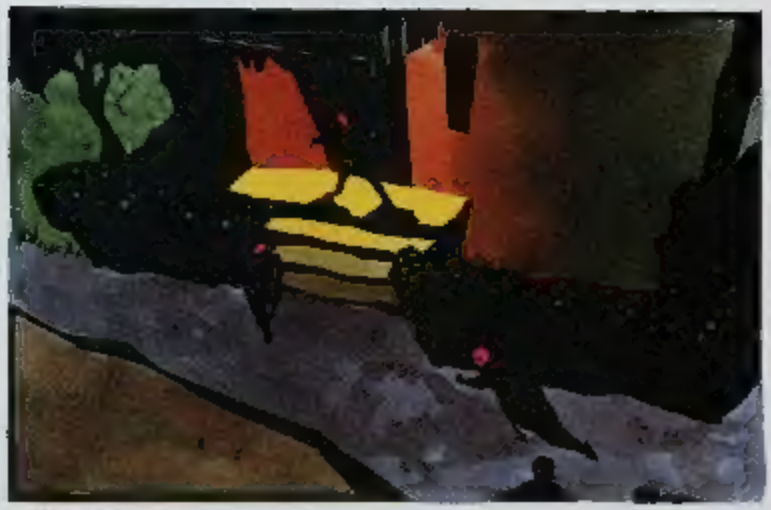
"ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! JUST A SECOND!"



"I'VE GOT IT! LET'S FLY!"

"HEY!"

"WHERE WE GOIN', MAL?"
"SPARTA. SPARTA'S ALWAYS GOOD FOR A KICK."



"SHHH!"

"WHO **YOU**? WHAT YOU WANT?"

"**BILLY! REACH!** CHECK UPSTAIRS!"

"WELL WELL! WHAT HAVE WE GOT HERE?"

"NO ——— UGH!"

"WOW! HAVE A HIT OFF *THIS*, REACH!"

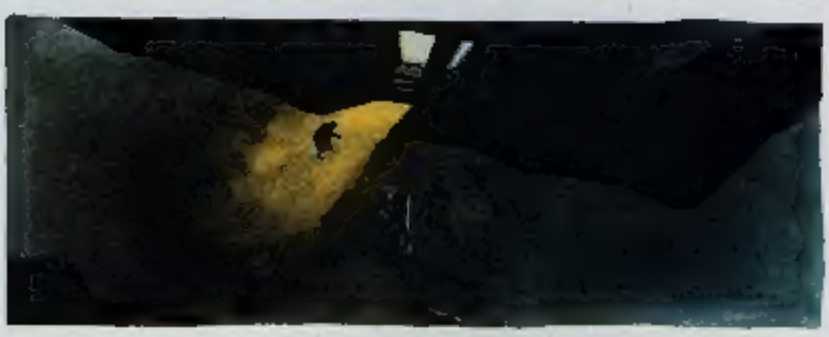
"GOOD SHIT, ISN'T IT ——— HO-*LEE!* WE'VE HIT THE JACKPOT!"

"LOOK AT ALL THIS CUTTER! THE CHINAMAN WAS LOADED!"
"DAMN!"

"IT'S JUST YOU AND ME, REACH, SO DON'T SPILL THE BEANS!"
"NO PROBLEM, MAN! BESIDES, WHO'S TO SAY THERE ISN'T MORE DOWNSTAIRS!"

"YOU GUYS FIND ANYTHING?"
"JUST SOME OLD FART SMOKING OPIUM—— SWEET STUFF!"

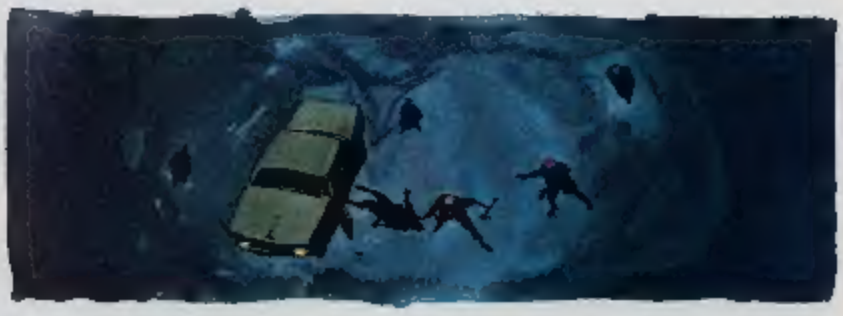
"LET'S MOVE OUT, THEN!"



"LOOK! THE FUCKIN' GUY'S ASLEEP!"

"WHAT'S THE STORY, JACK?"
"WUZZA? HOMMA—— I'M UH..."

"C'MON! GET OUTTA THERE, DING-DONG!"
"MAL, SOMEONE MIGHT SEE US!"

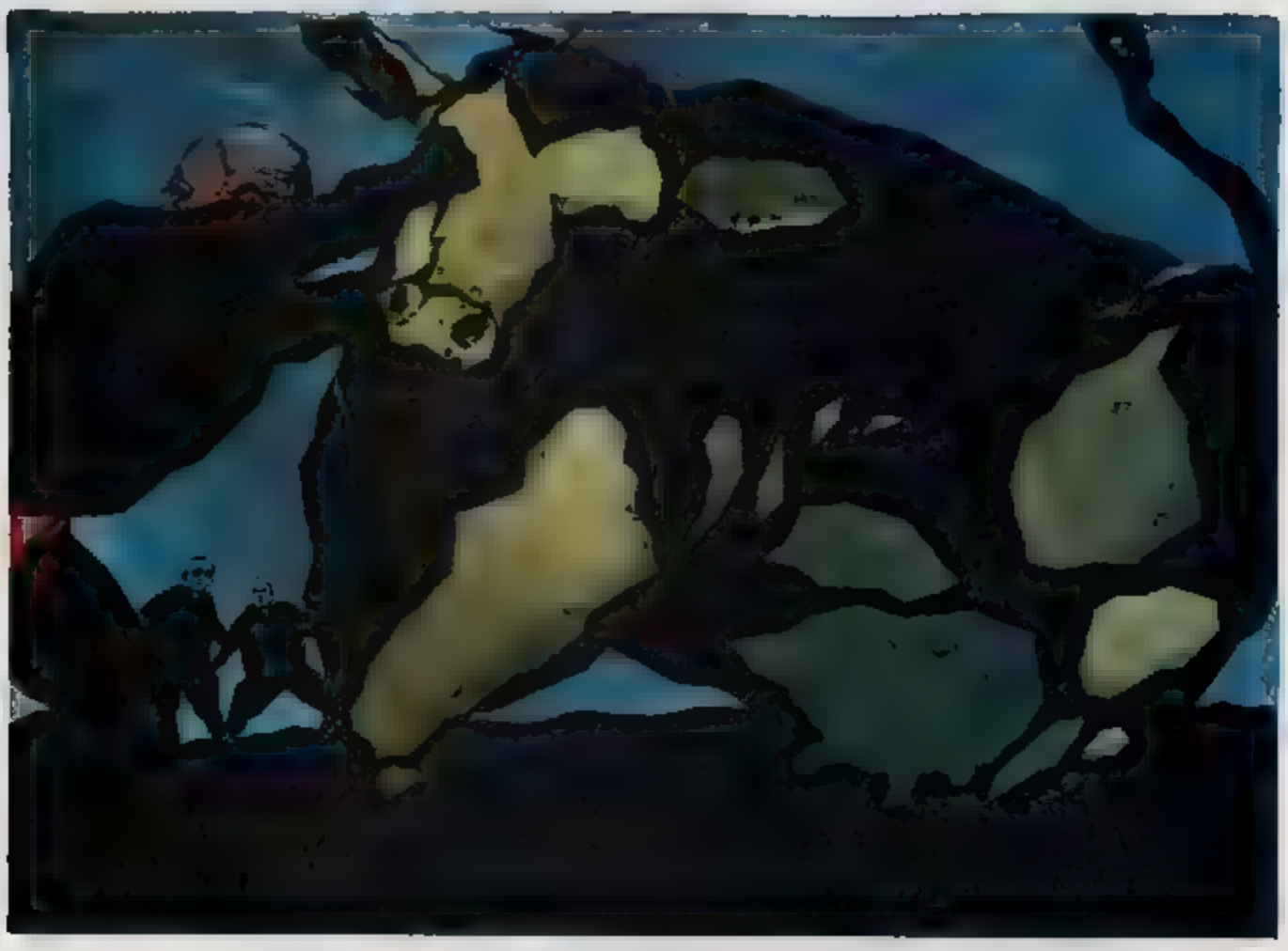


"WHAT, ARE YOU WUSSING OUT ON US, REACH? DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM!"

"NO, I MEAN... JUST BE COOL, MAN!"
"WHAT? HA! YOU'RE FUCKED UP, KID!"

"MAL, LOOK!"
"YEAH, I HAVEN'T DONE THIS SINCE I WAS A KID!"

"YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE!"



"LOOK OUT, YOU GUYS! THIS SUCKER IS PISSED!"

"YAHOO!"

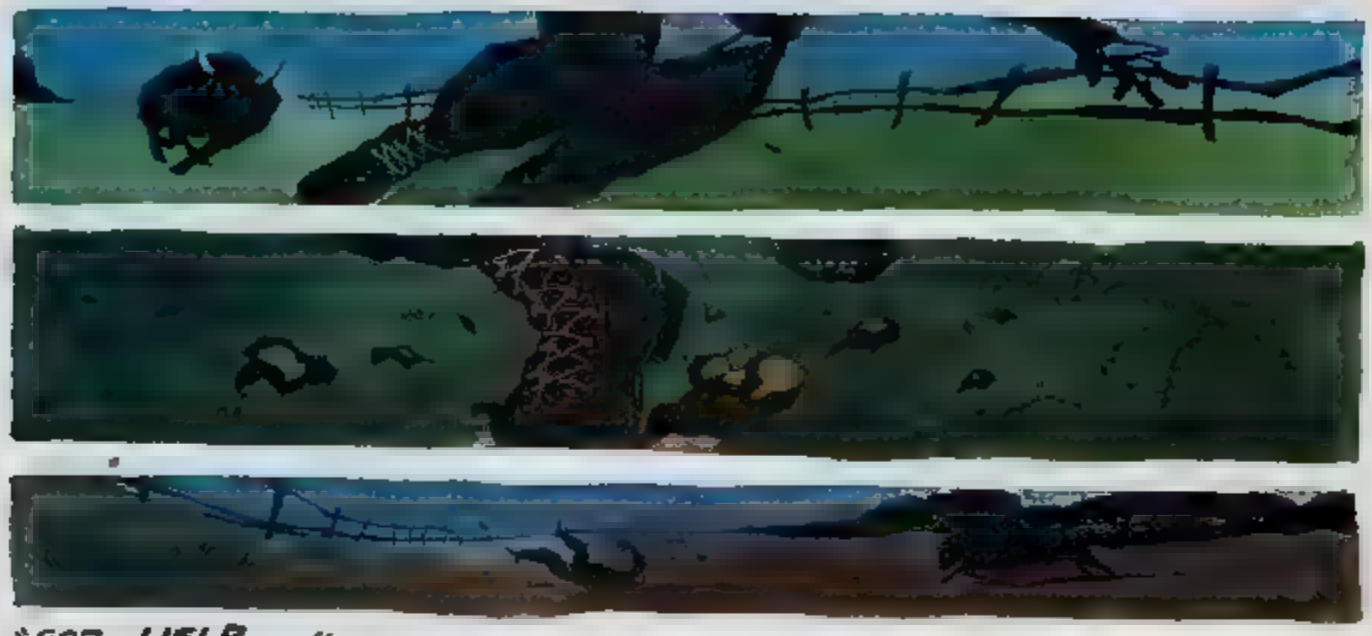
"OH, MAN! WHO NEEDS RUSH WHEN YOU'VE GOT THIS?"

"UH-OH! THIS ONE'S MINE, BOYS!"

"YOU STUPID BASTARD! YOU WON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HIT YOU!"

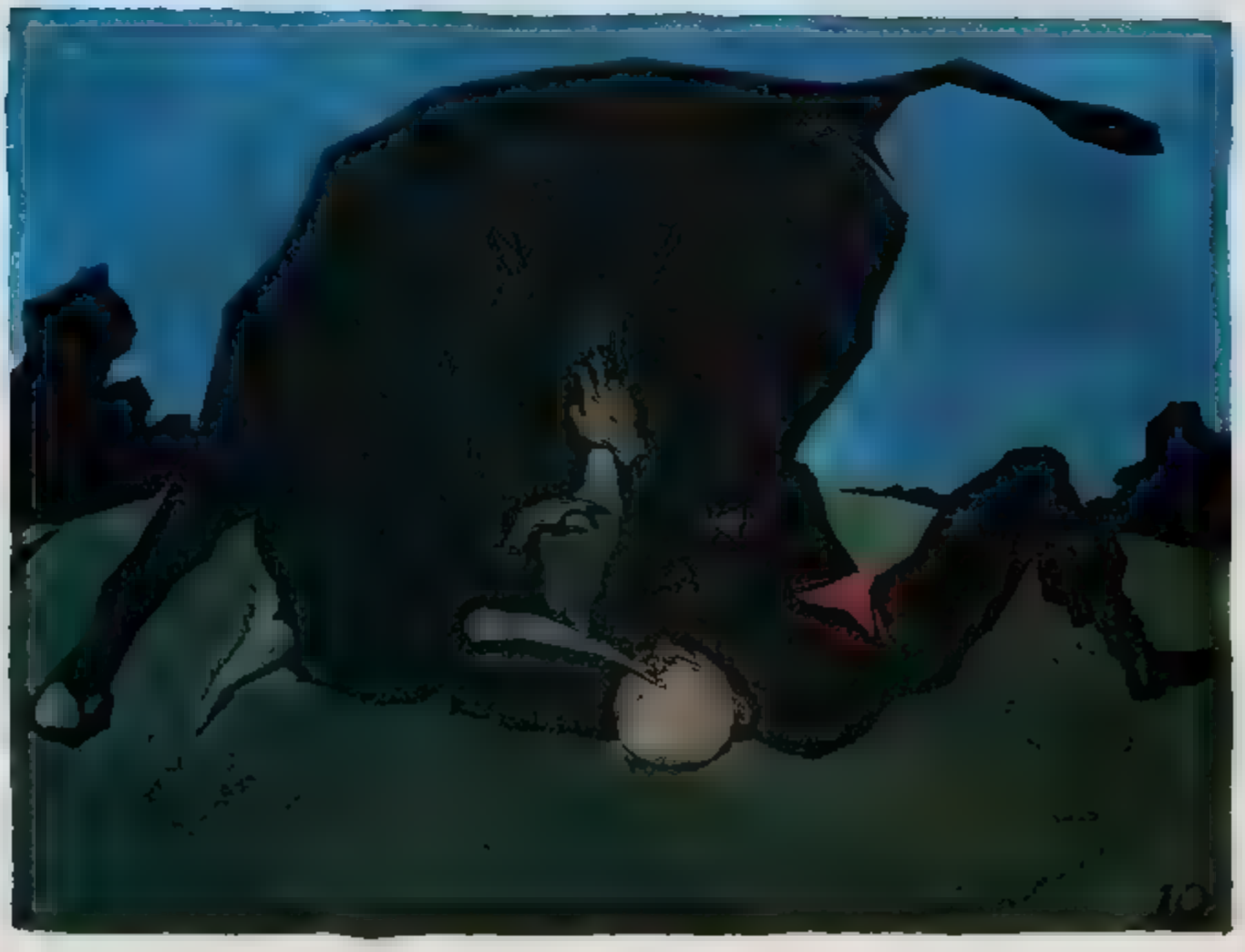
"UPSY DAISY! WHA——?"

"OHHHH, SHIT!"



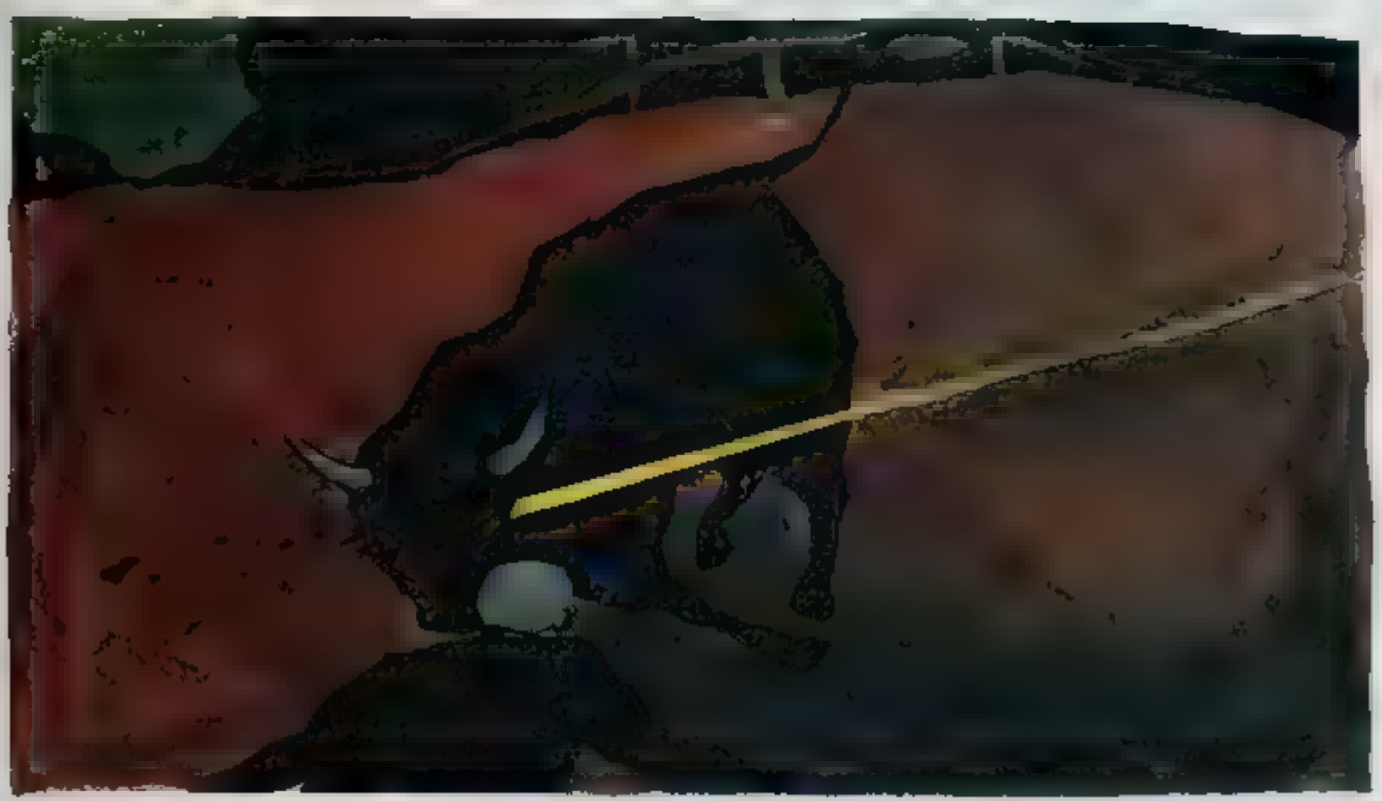
"GOD, HELP——"

"AHHHHH!"



"MY FACE, MY FACE!"

"OH, GOD, NO!"

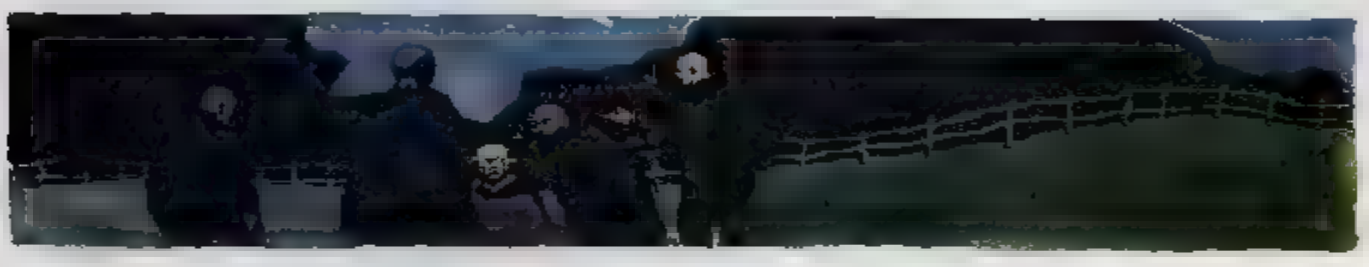


"YOU OKAY, MAL?"

"IT'S NOT AS BAD AS YOU THINK! CAN YOU SEE OUT THAT EYE?"
"I DON'T KNOW! THERE'S TOO MUCH BLOOD!"

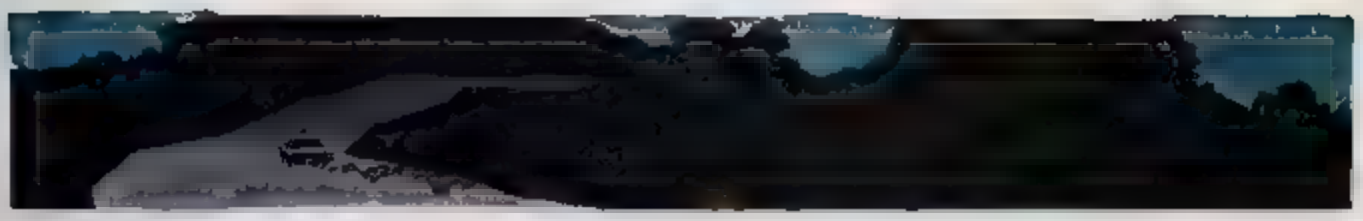
"BUT YOU DID **GOOD**, BILLY! YOU'RE ONE OF THE BROS!"

"WE — WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, MAL!"
"OH, **YEAH**?"



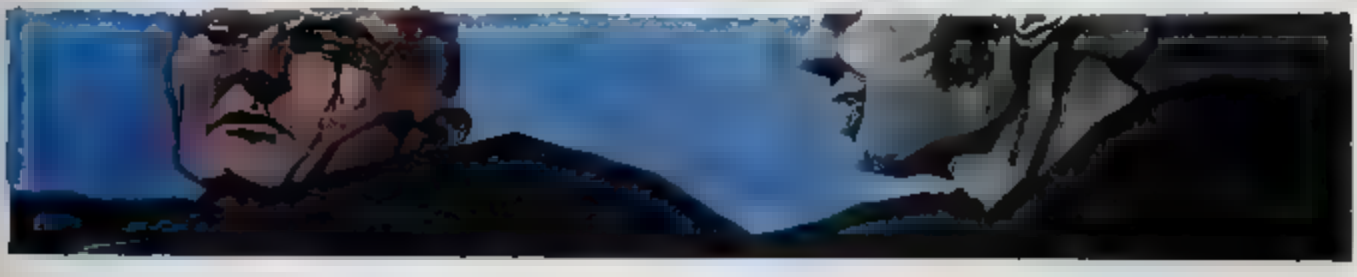
"I DIDN'T SEE **YOU** BUSTING YOUR ASS TO HELP ME, REACH!"
"MAL, GO **EASY**! HE COULDN'T HAVE DONE ANYTHING!"

"LET'S GET THE HELL **OUT** OF HERE!"



"HOW'S IT NOW?"
"THE BLEEDING'S STOPPED."

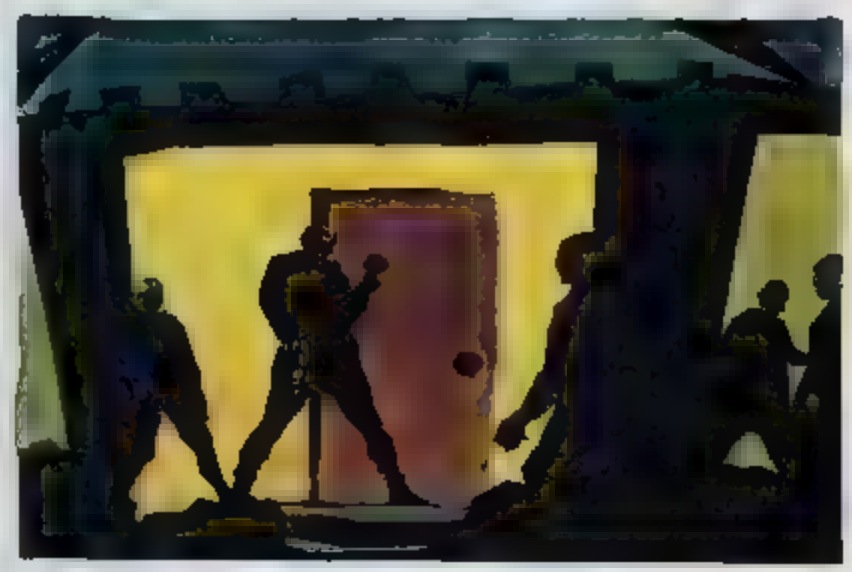
"MAN, THAT IS **SOME** CUT! THE GUYS IN **C.B.**'S 'LL———"
"SHUT UP, D!"



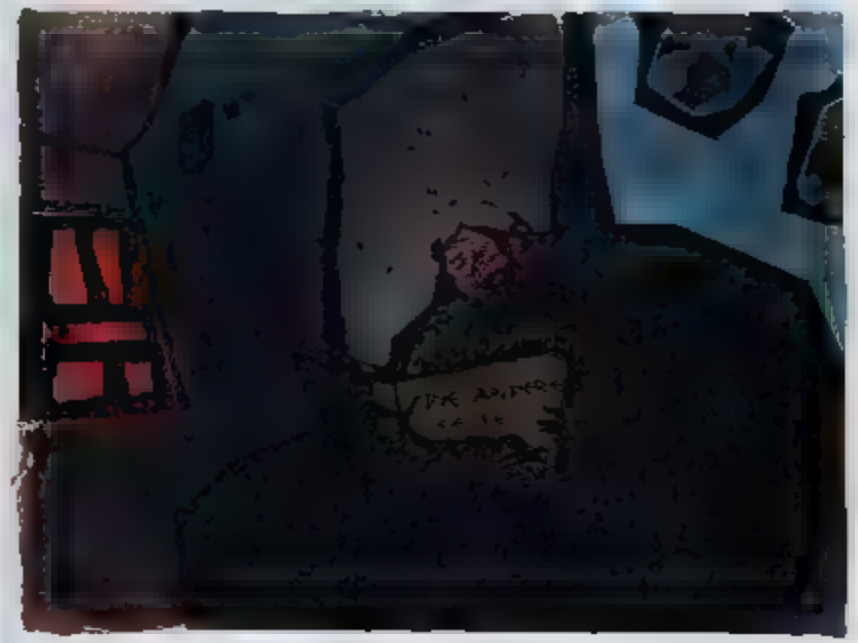
"MAKE THAT **LEFT**, REACH!"
"BUT **THAT'S** NOT THE WAY———"

"DID YOU THINK WE'RE GOING BACK EMPTY-HANDED? THINK **AGAIN**,, DUMB-ASS!"

"THIS ONE LOOKS GOOD! STOP AT THE CORNER!"



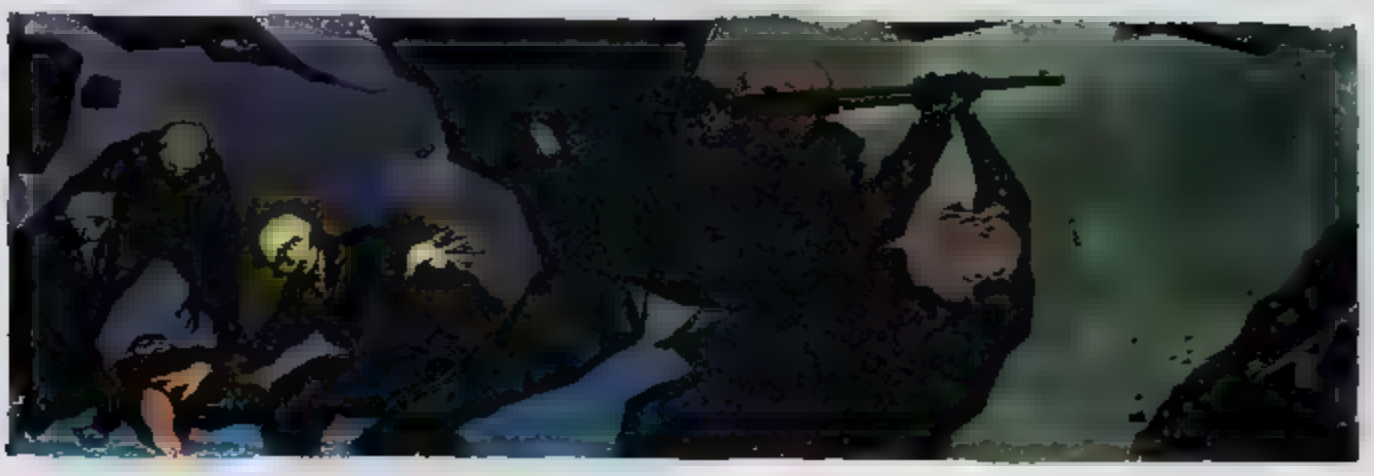
"MMM?"



"WAS IS——MEIN GOTT!"

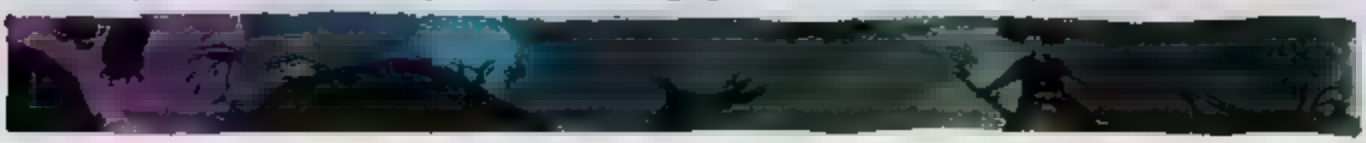
"NO! KEEP AWAY!"

"HOLY SHIT! SHE'S KILLED D!"



"SO? I NEVER LIKED HIM ANYWAY!"

"YOU HEAR THOSE DOGS? YOU KNOW SOMEONE'S HEARD US!"
"WELL, HELL, WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE THEN!"



"D! OH, GOD, D!"

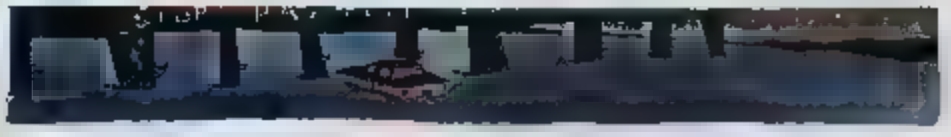
"WHAT'RE YOU WHIMPERING ABOUT, REACH?"

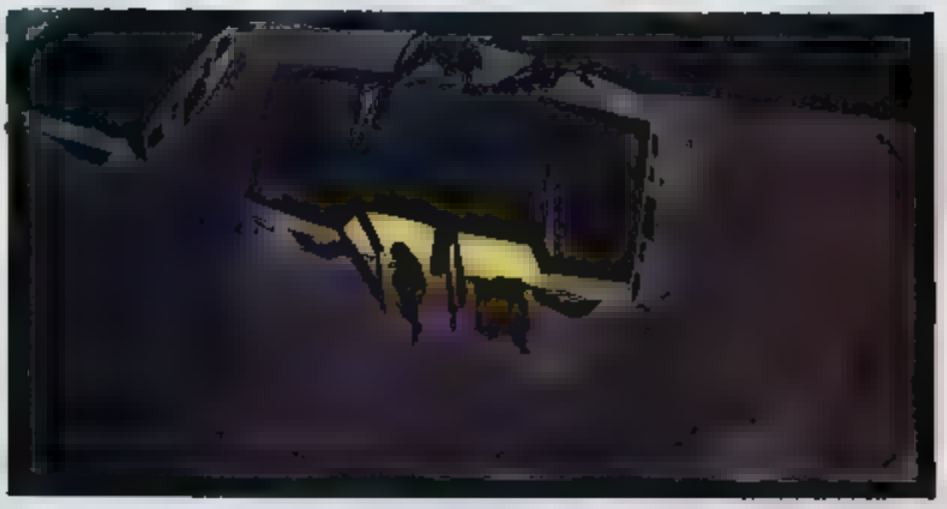
"FUCK OFF, MAL! HE'S SAVED YOUR ASS PLENTY OF TIMES, AND YOU COULDN'T GIVE A SHIT!"

"DON'T EVEN START WITH ME, MAN, OR I'LL END IT RIGHT HERE!"

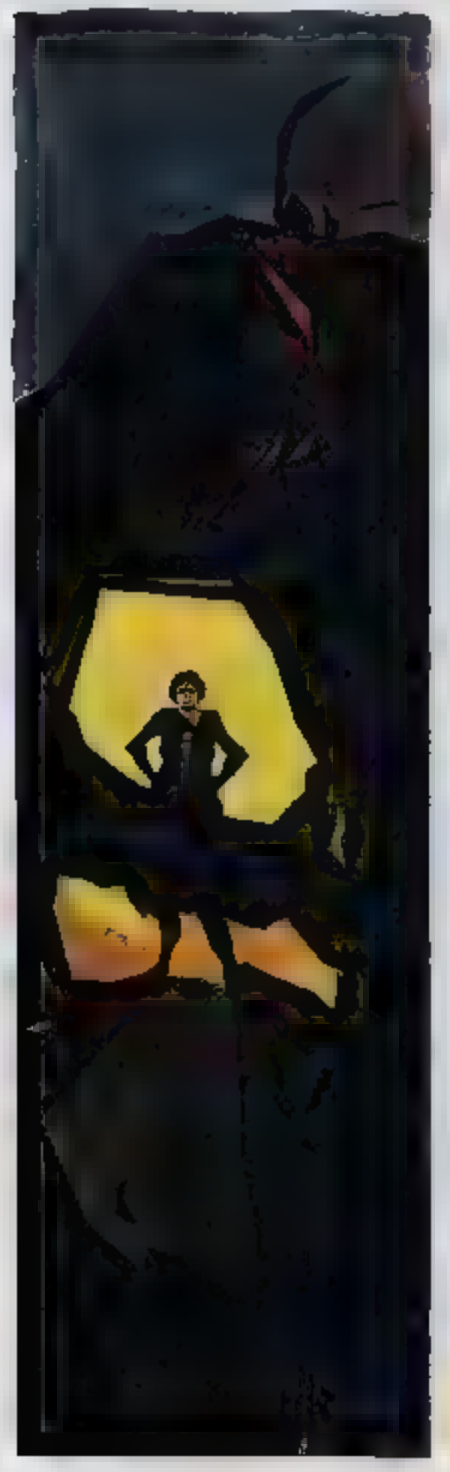
"I LOVE YOU, TOO, 'BROTHER'!"

"DON'T BE A WISEASS, REACH! JUST DRIVE US DOWNTOWN! WE'LL DROP D OFF ON AVENUE A! NO COP'S GONNA WORRY ABOUT WHO KILLED A FUCKING SKINHEAD!"





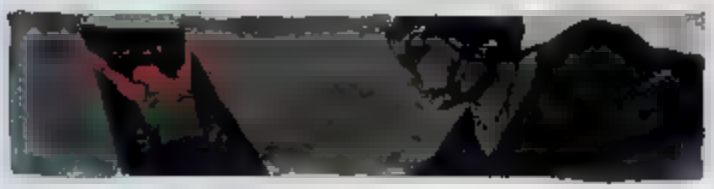
"HIYA, REACH. YOU'RE EARLY."
"YEAH. NOT MUCH DOING TONIGHT."



"CAN I MAKE YOU SOME COFFEE?"
"NO, NO THANKS."

"WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU SEEM A LITTLE *DOWN.*"
"AH, IT'S NOTHING."

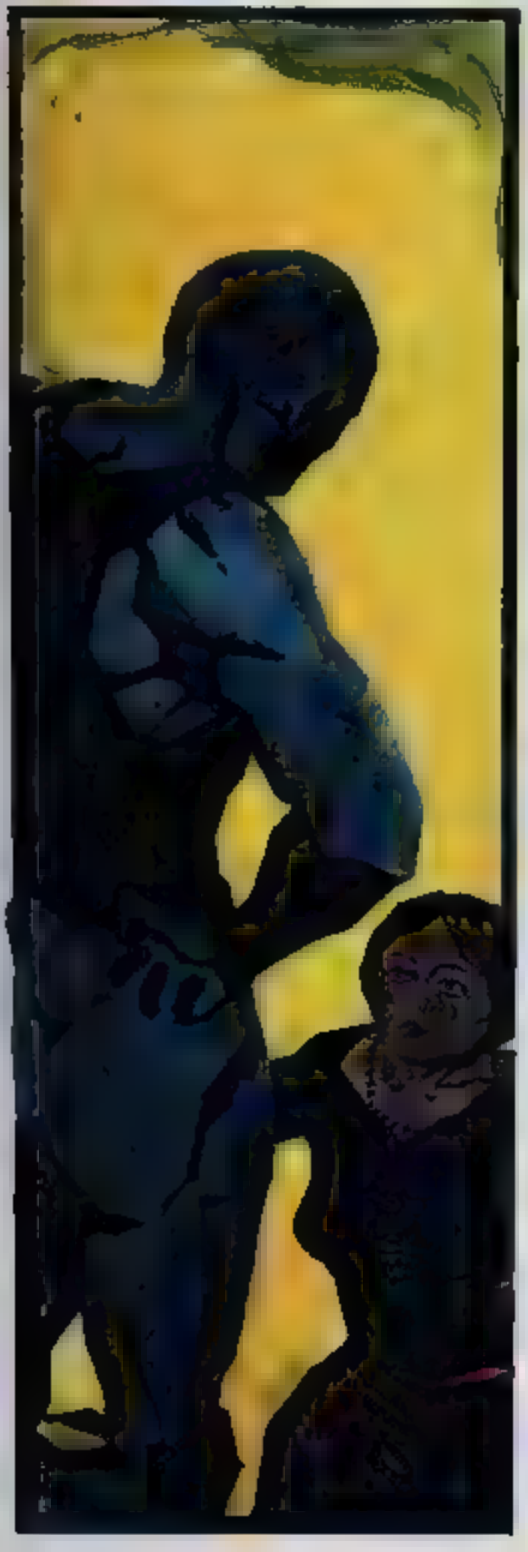
"... I'M JUST GETTING TIRED OF THE *SCENE*, Y'KNOW? I'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR FIVE YEARS AND IT'S GOING NOWHERE."



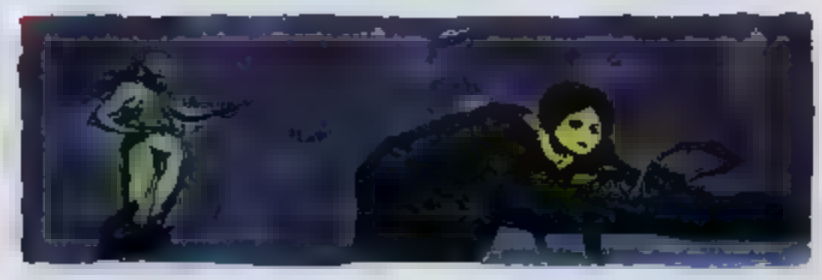
"THEN GET *OUT* OF IT."
"GET *OUT* OF IT? AND DO *WHAT?* I LEFT HOME WHEN I WAS SIXTEEN! WHAT AM I GONNA *DO?*"

"WELL, YOU COULD GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND GET A GOOD JOB!"
"GO BACK TO SCHOOL? I DON'T HAVE ANY MO — ANYWAY, YOU GOTTA BE SHITTING ME!"

"YOU NEVER TOLD ME WHY THEY CALL YOU REACH!"
"IT'S SHORT FOR REACH-AROUND... PART OF AN OLD JOKE NOT WORTH TELLING."



"WHERE — WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SONIA?"



"OH, I SEE, BABE. YOU CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES WITH THE BIG A GOING AROUND!"

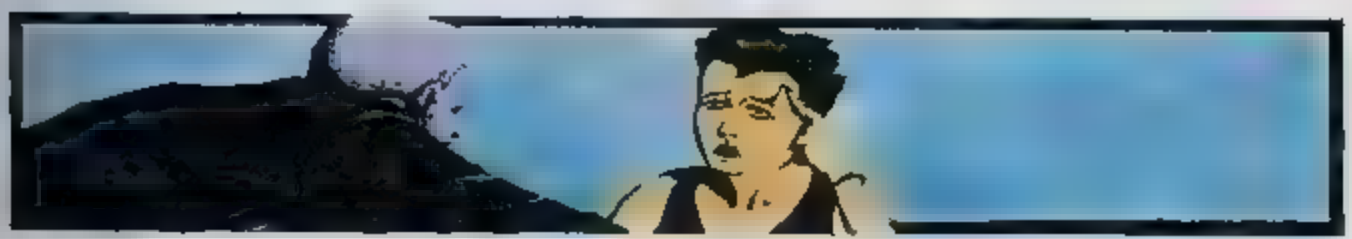
"HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT FOR THIS?"
"WE'LL TALK ABOUT THAT LATER, REACH."

"BILLY! WHAT'S GOING ON?"
"YOU REMEMBER MY SISTER CHLOE, DON'T YOU?"
"YEAH."

"SOME ASSHOLE TRIED TO ATTACK HER AT THE TARTARUS CLUB. IT'S A GOOD THING THERE WERE SOME COOL SKINS THERE TO BAIL HER OUT!"
"YEAH! YOU OKAY, CHLOE?"

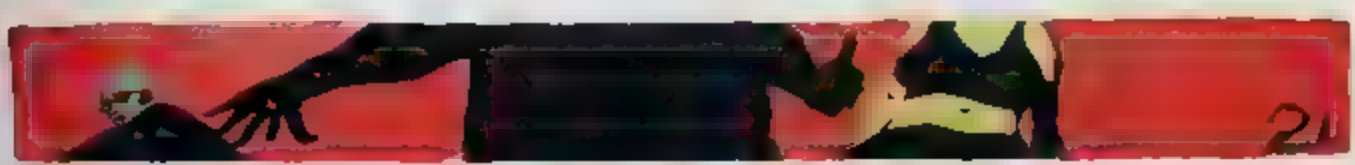
"I THINK SO! I WAS JUST SITTING AT THE BAR WITH A COUPLE OF FRIENDS! I THOUGHT THIS GUY WAS TRYING TO PICK ME UP, AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN HE WHIPS OUT THIS BIG KNIFE!"

"WHAT'D HE LOOK LIKE?"
"HE'S ABOUT YOUR HEIGHT, BUT STOCKIER! AND HE HAD A CUT ACROSS THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS FACE!"



"WAS HE A SKINHEAD?"
"YES."

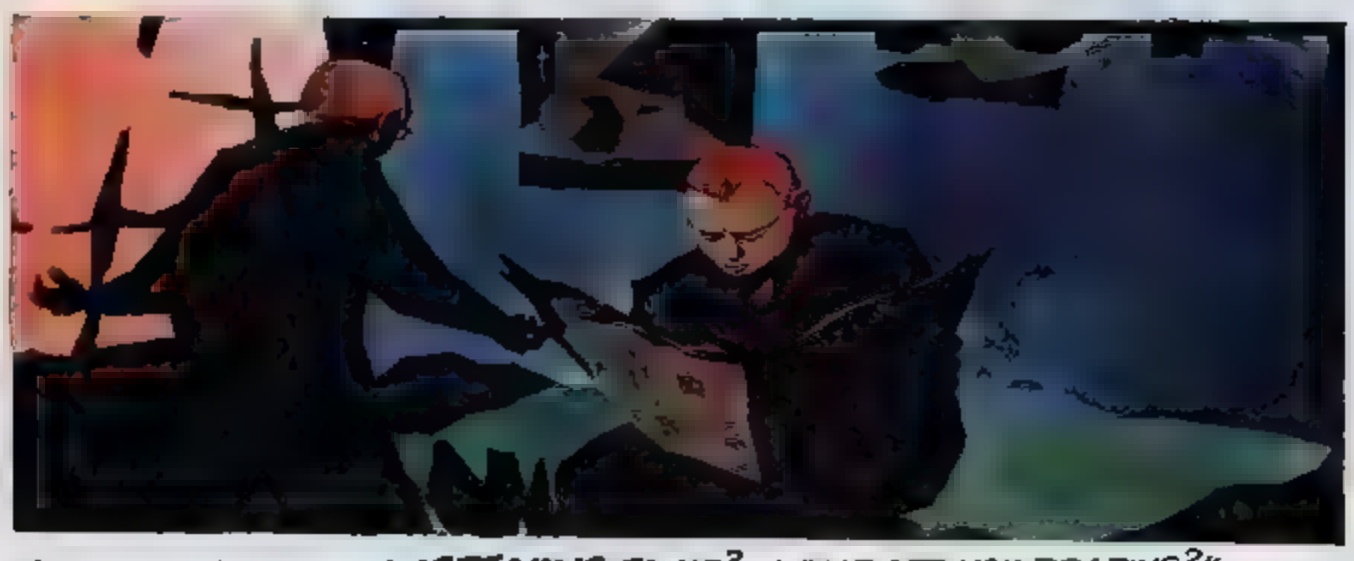
"REACH, I ——"
"SHUT UP, BILLY! I —— I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, CHLOE!"



"C'MON, SIS, I'LL WALK YOU DOWNSTAIRS."
"GOOD-BYE, AND THANKS FOR EVERYTHING!"
"MMM."

"REACH, YOU KNOW HOW MUCH MONEY WE LANDED?"
"NO, I HAVEN'T COUNTED IT YET."

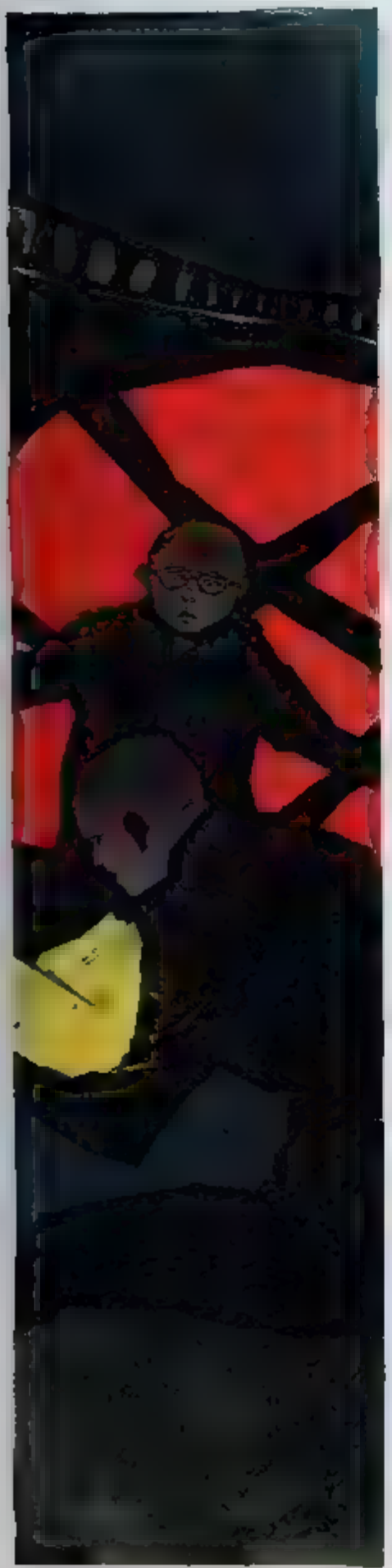
"THAT WAS A **GRAND** A PIECE! NOT BAD, EH?"
"M-HM."



"HEY, ARE YOU EVEN **LISTENING** TO ME? WHAT ARE YOU READING?"
"I'M LOOKING AT APARTMENTS IN JERSEY I'M MOVING **OUT**, BILLY."

"WHAT? BUT WHAT ABOUT CHLOE? YOU KNOW MAL'LL—

"I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT! RELAX!"



"I— I THOUGHT WE WERE **BROTHERS!**"

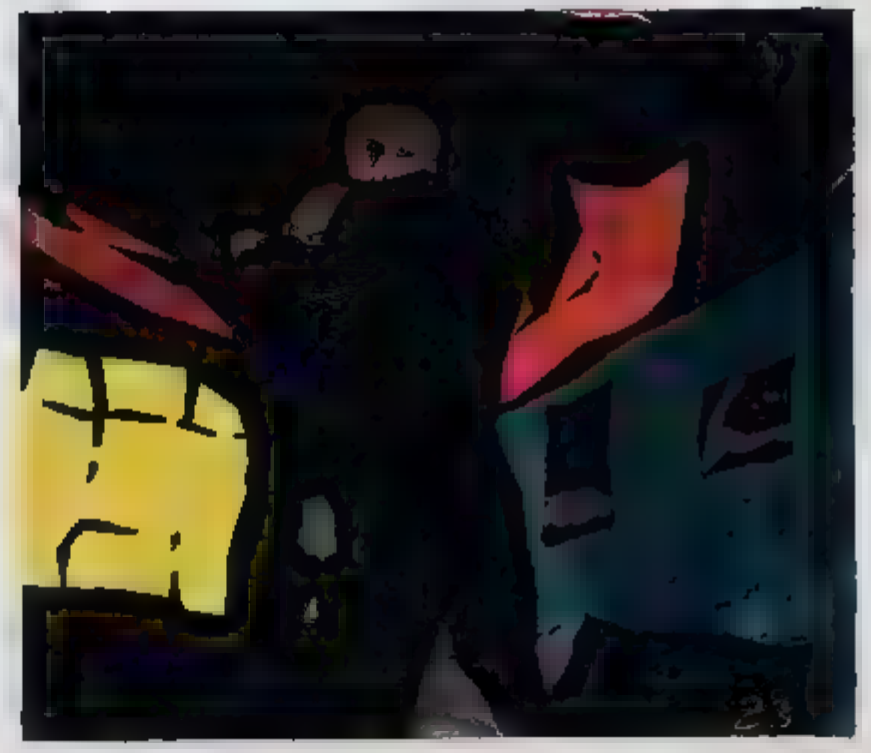
"WE **ARE**— BUT I'M STILL SPLITTING!"

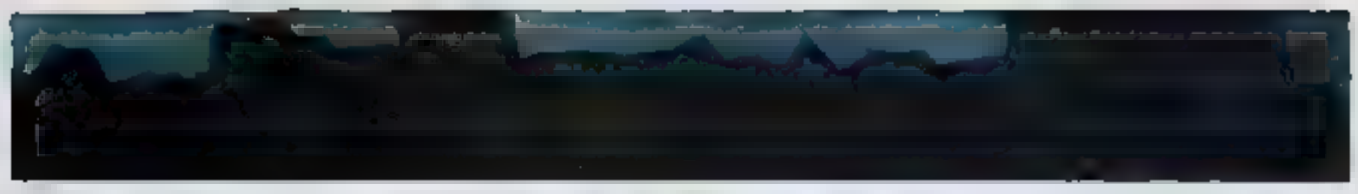
"BUT WHAT ABOUT **ME**?"

"YOU'VE GOT A GUN! IF HE FUCKS WITH YOU, **USE** IT!"

"BUT I.. I CAN'T MAKE IT WITHOUT YOU! GOD. IT WAS NEVER LIKE THIS BEFORE!"

"I'M **SORRY**, KID! I JUST NEED SOME SPACE, SOME TIME TO THINK! I'LL STAY UNTIL THIS BLOWS OVER!"

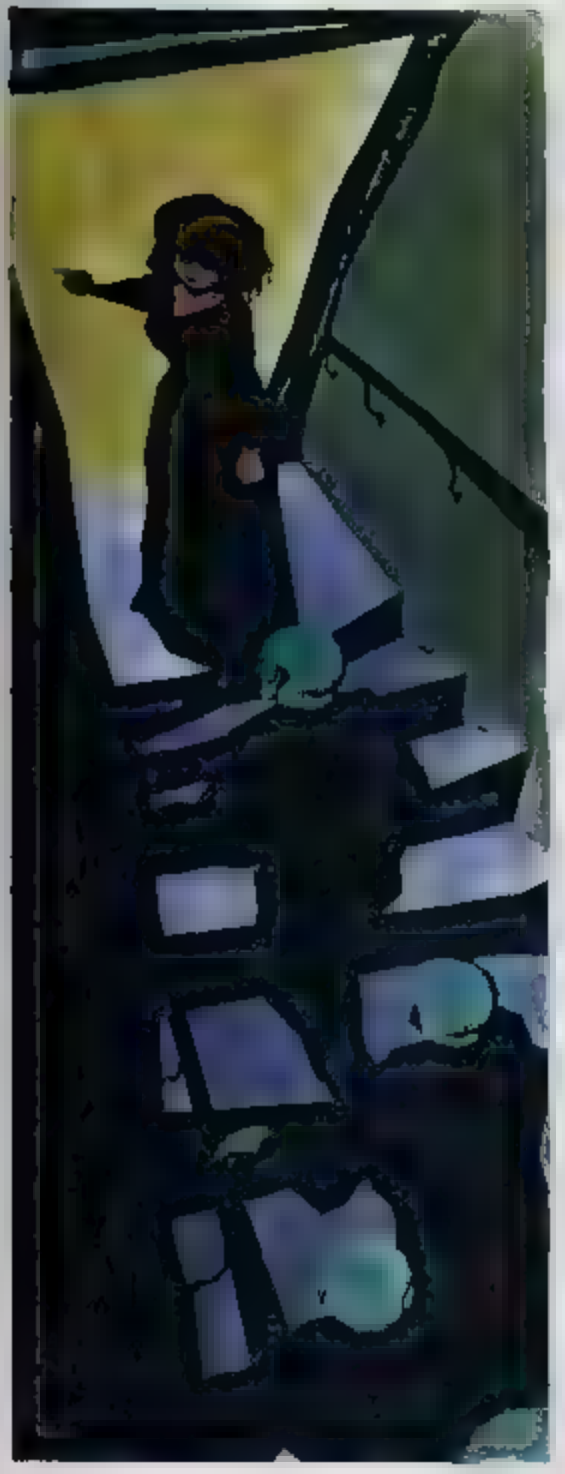




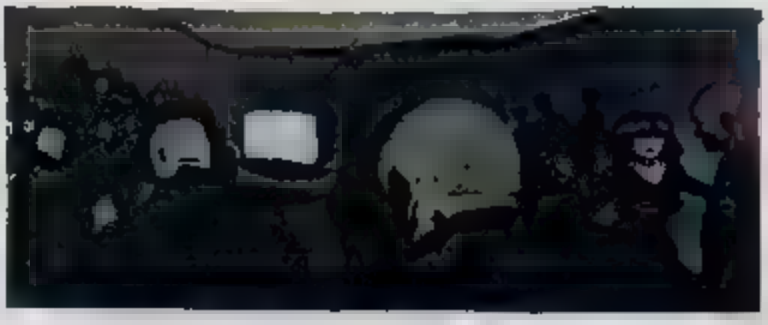
"I'M GLAD YOU CAME, REACH. IT WOULDN'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT YOU."
"I GUESS **SOMEONE** HAS TO WATCH YOUR BACK."
"WHAT IS THIS SHIT YOU'RE MUMBLING BACK THERE?"
"NOTHIN'."

"HI, MONA."
"MAL! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A MILLION YEARS! OH, NICE SCAR, BY THE WAY."

"YEAH. HEH. SO WHAT'RE YOU DOING HOME TONIGHT?"
"I'M WATCHING FLICKS WITH SOME OF MY FRIENDS! YOU'VE SEEN 'CLOCKWORK' AND 'CHAINSAW', HAVEN'T YOU?"
"OH, YEAH!"



"YOU GUYS CAN SQUEEZE IN IN THERE! MAL, I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING UPSTAIRS!"



"THAT WAS MAL, WASN'T IT?"
"YEAH. IT'S GUYS LIKE HIM WHO GIVE THE WHOLE SCENE A BAD REP."

"WHAT'S UP, MONA?"
"I JUST WANTED TO TALK TO YOU FOR A MINUTE."

"STILL THE SAME OLD ROOM, I SEE."
"IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT TO SAY?"

"WELL, WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU WANT FROM ME?"
"A LITTLE COURTESY FOR STARTERS! YOU COULD CALL ME ONCE IN A WHILE!"

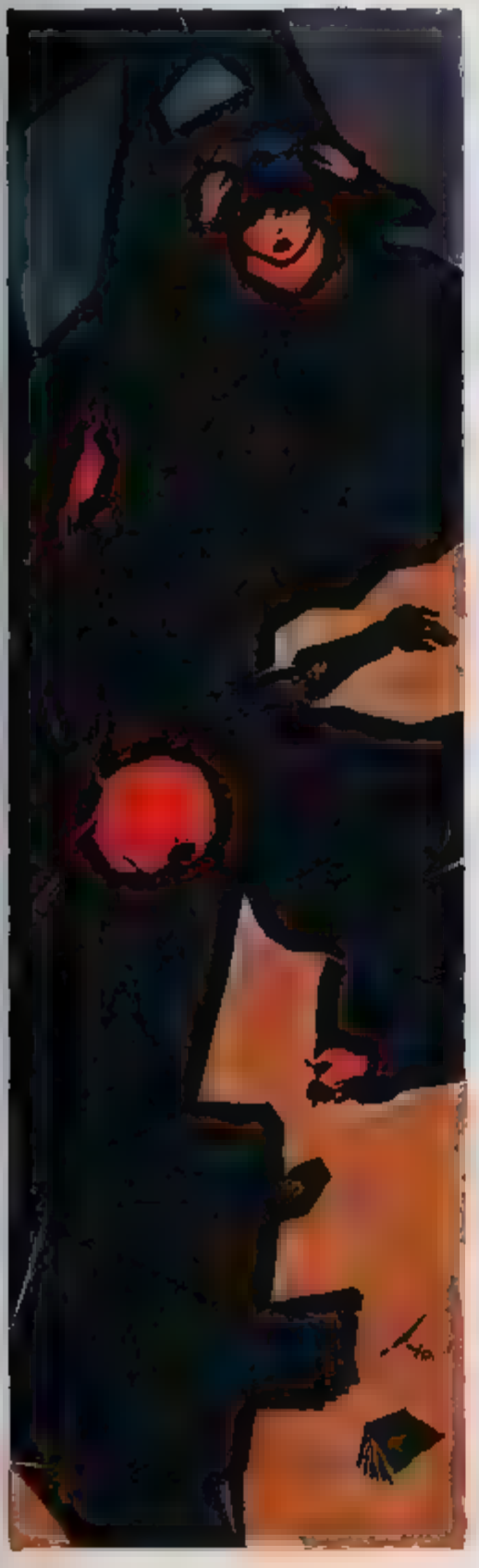
"I'VE BEEN BUSY! THE BROG AND I HAVE DONE A LOT OF WORK LATELY!"
"SO I NOTICED! WHERE'D YOU GET THE CAR? YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A LICENSE!"

"WHAT IS THIS SHIT? I'M NOT EVEN HERE FOR FIVE MINUTES AND YOU——"
"WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? FOR ME TO KISS YOUR ASS AND FORGIVE YOU FOR ALL THE TIMES YOU TURNED MY LIFE UPSIDE DOWN? YOU'RE CRAZY!"

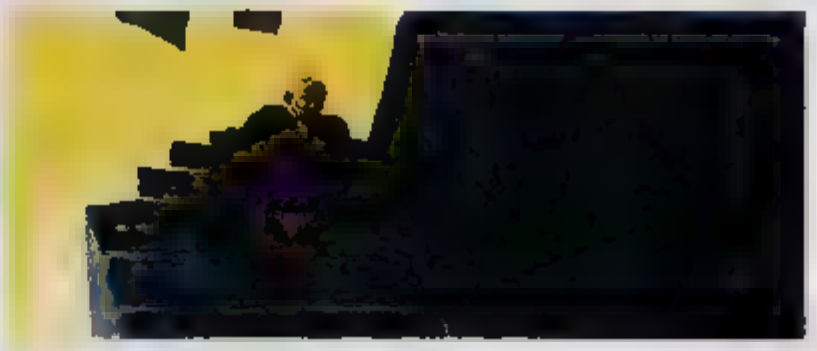
"CRAZY? I'M CRAZY? I'LL SHOW YOU CRAZY!"

"OH, MY GOD! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"

"STOP IT! YOU'RE RUINING MY THINGS!"



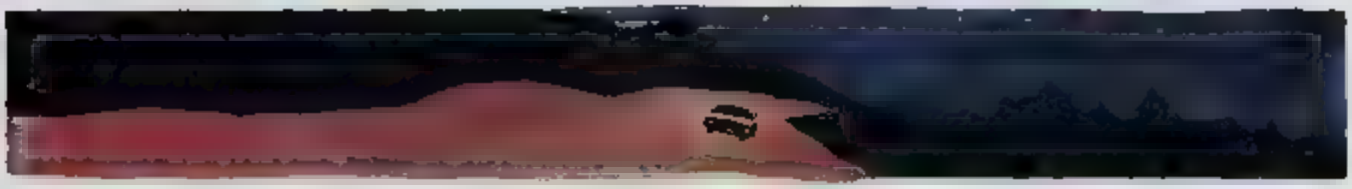
"THERE! YOU SATISFIED, MONA? IS THAT WHAT YOU WANTED TO SEE?"



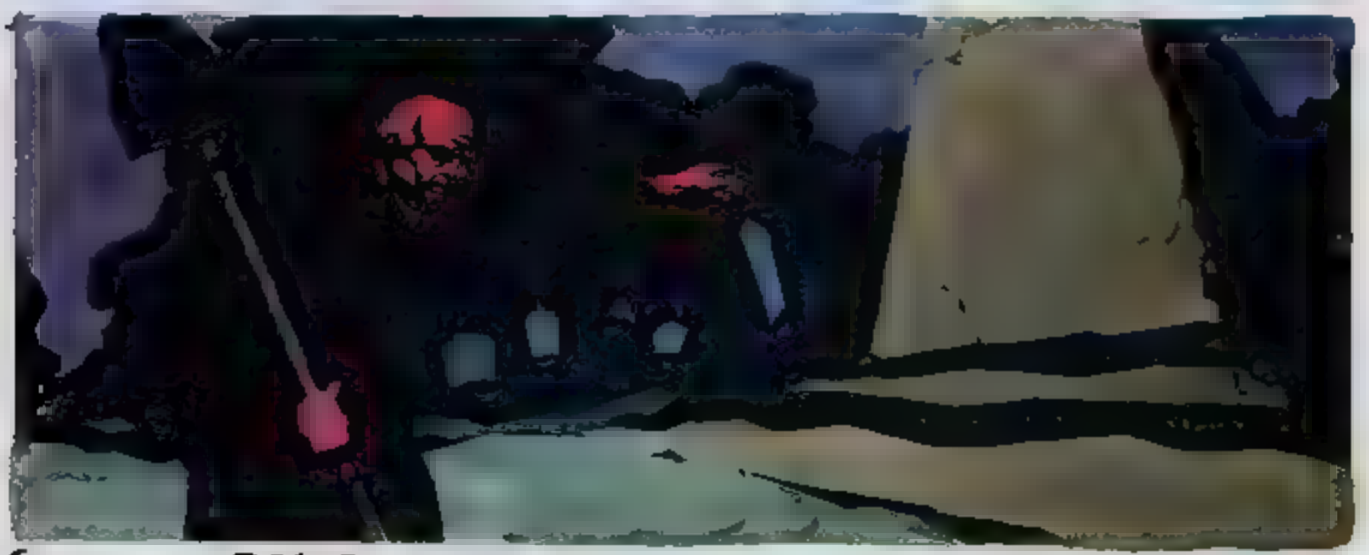
"LET'S GO, BOYS! I'M LEAVING!"

"MAL, WAIT "
"YEAH?"

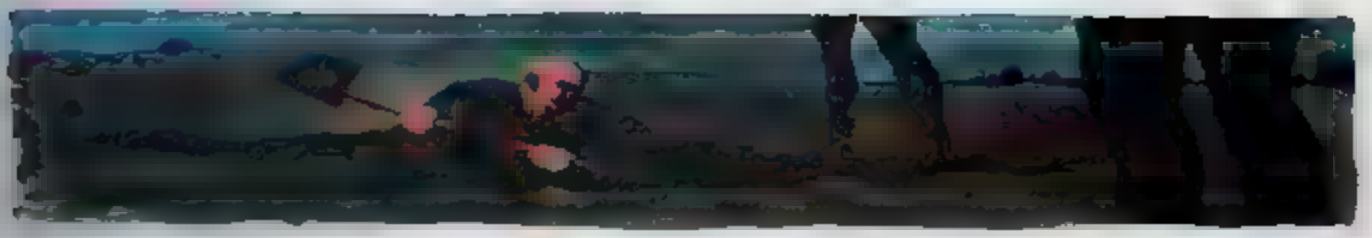
"TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!"
"YEAH, OKAY."



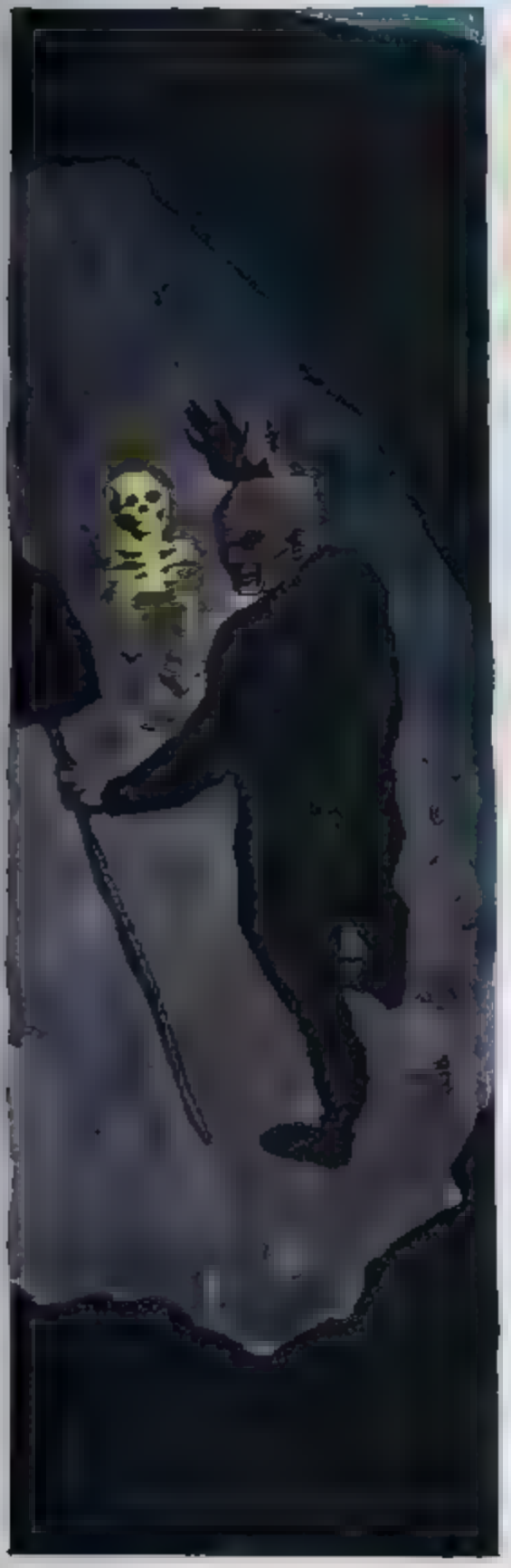
"YEAH, *OKAY*—I'LL SHOW HER WHO'S..."



(WHAT AM I *DOING* HERE? REACH, GET A GRIP!)

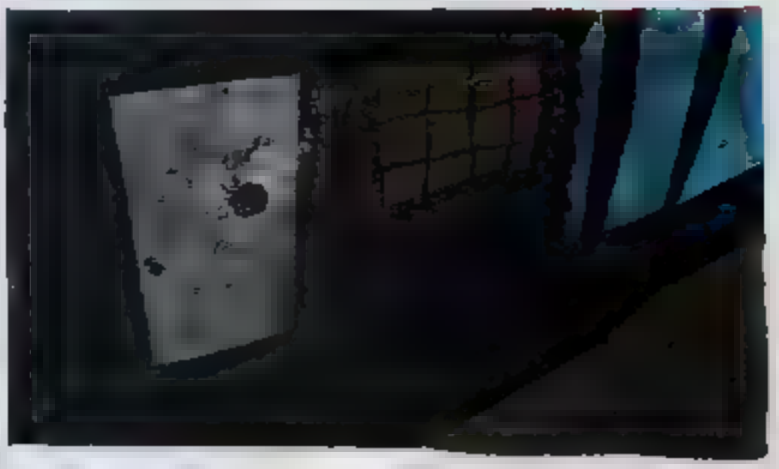


"NOW THIS, MY FRIENDS, IS *HARDCORE!*"



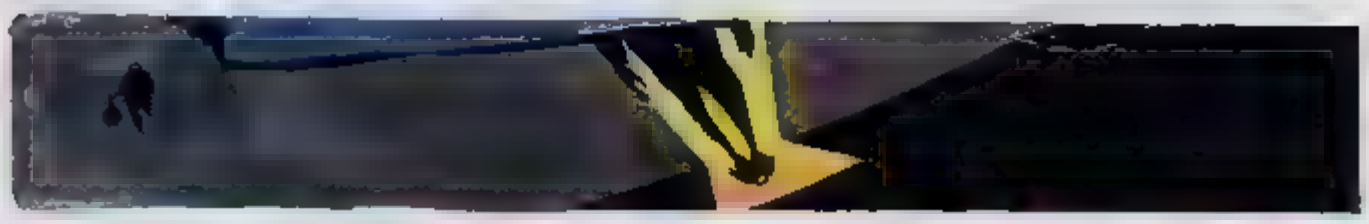
"MAL, WHAT THE ——?"

"JUST A LITTLE GIFT FOR A *FRIEND.*"



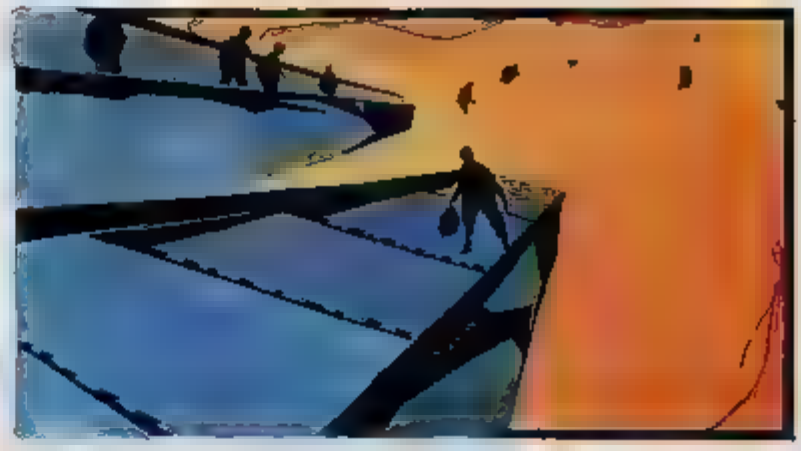
"THAT'S IT, BILLY! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT! I'M GETTING **OUT!**"
"REACH, C'MON! WHAT AM I GONNA **DO?**"

"GET **OFF** IT, MAN! WHAT ABOUT THAT THOUSAND YOU GOT OFF THE CHINK? YOU CAN AFFORD TO LIVE ALONE NOW!"
"BUT. . ."



"ONE WAY, PLEASE."

"FRIEND, COULD YOU SPARE ——"
"GET A JOB."



"GIT *IN* HERE, WOMAN!"
"BUT I AIN'T *NEVER*..."

"NOW YOU JES' *SIDDOWN*, AND WE'LL BE THERE IN AN HOUR! AND I DON'T WANT NO *BACKTALK* FROM YOU! WE'LL GET YOU CLEANED UP, AND YOU CAN TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF!"

"HEY, ARE WE IN CALIFORNIA? HEL-*LO*, CALIFORNIA!"
"WILL YOU SHUDDUP?"

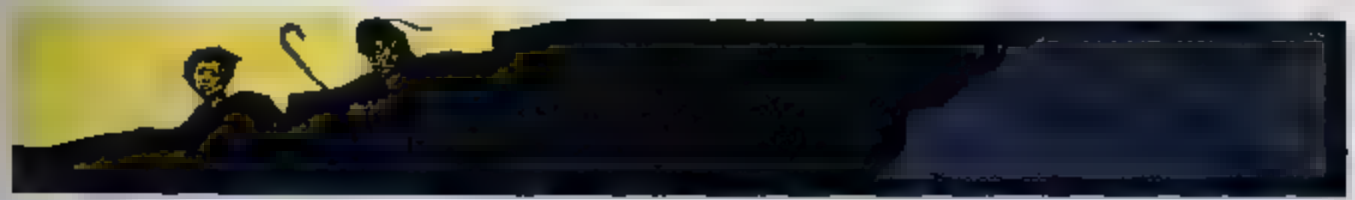
(SHE SOUNDS LIKE A MYNA BIRD!)

"WE AREN'T IN CALIFORNIA! WE'RE IN NEW JERSEY!"
"OHHH."

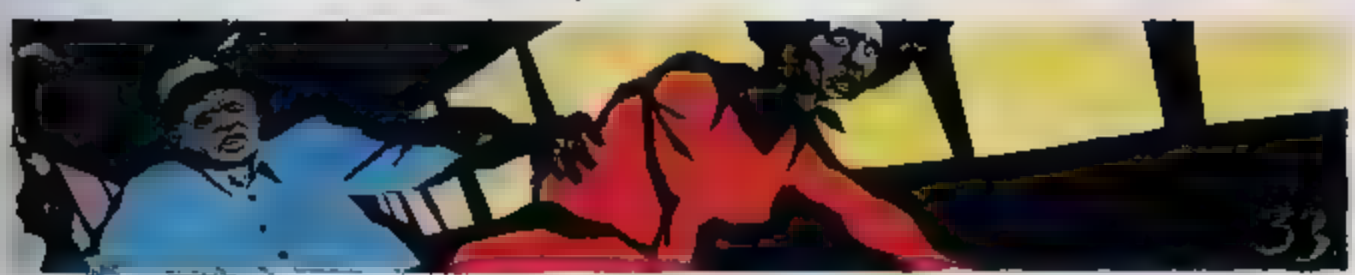
"HEL-LO, NEW JERSEY! HI!"
"WILL YOU STOP THAT? EVERYONE'S LOOKING AT US!"

"OHHH."

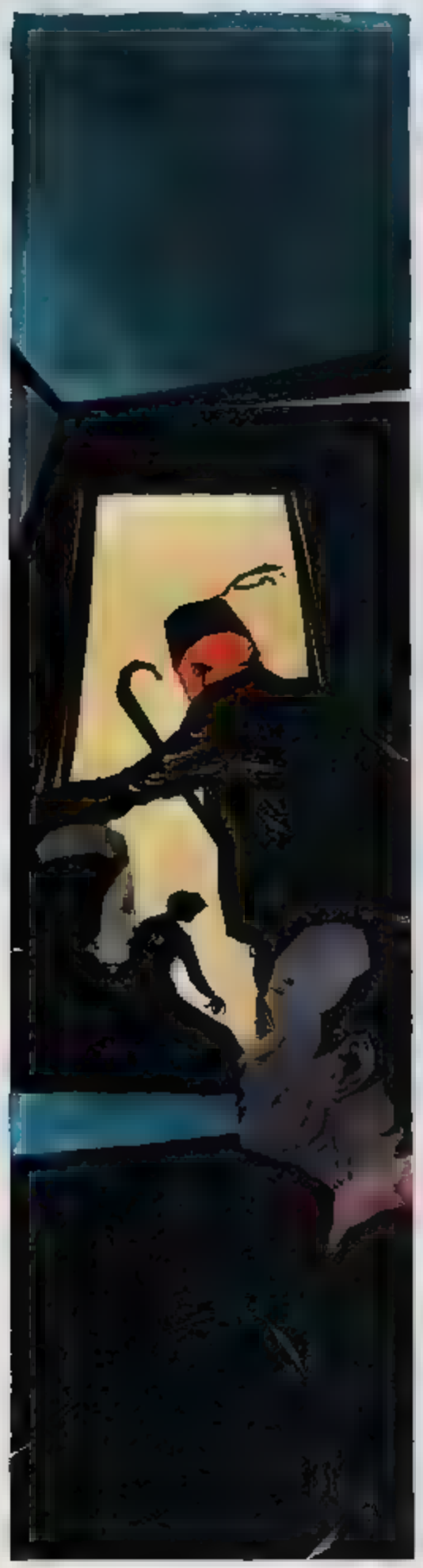
"I GOTTA PEE."
"WHAT?"



"I GOTTA PEE RIGHT NOW!"
"WHERE YOU GOIN'? SIDDOWN!"



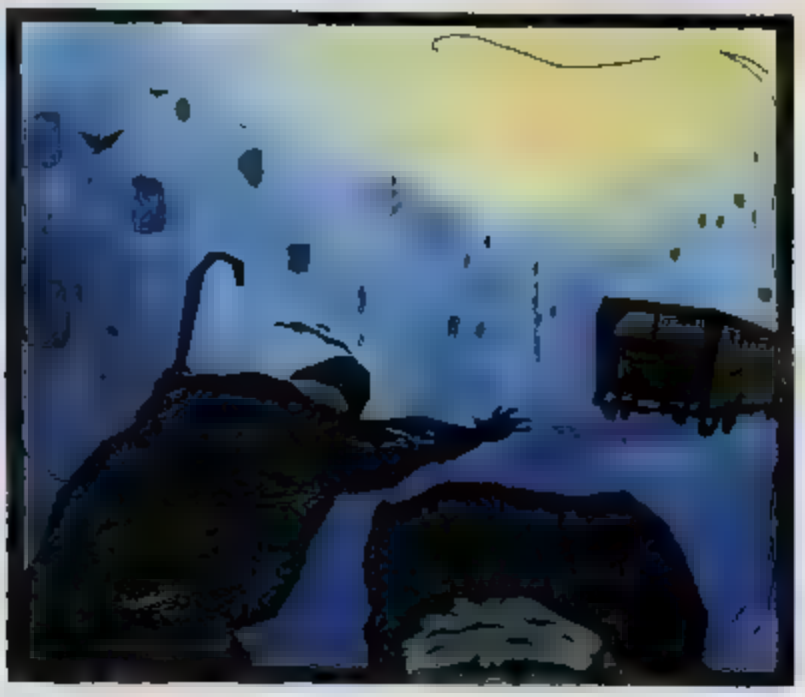
"COME BACK HERE! YOU HEAR ME, WOMAN?"



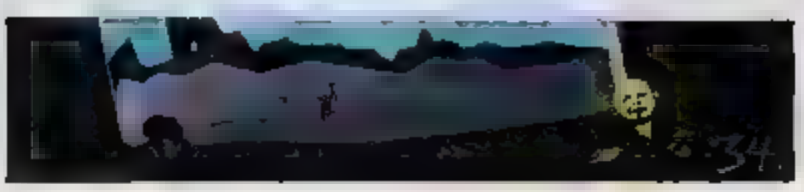
"HEY! GET BACK ON THE BUS! THIS AIN'T OUR STOP!"

"STOP THAT! ARE YOU CRAZY?"

"NO, WAIT! COME BACK!"



"WAIT! I'M GETTING BACK ON!"



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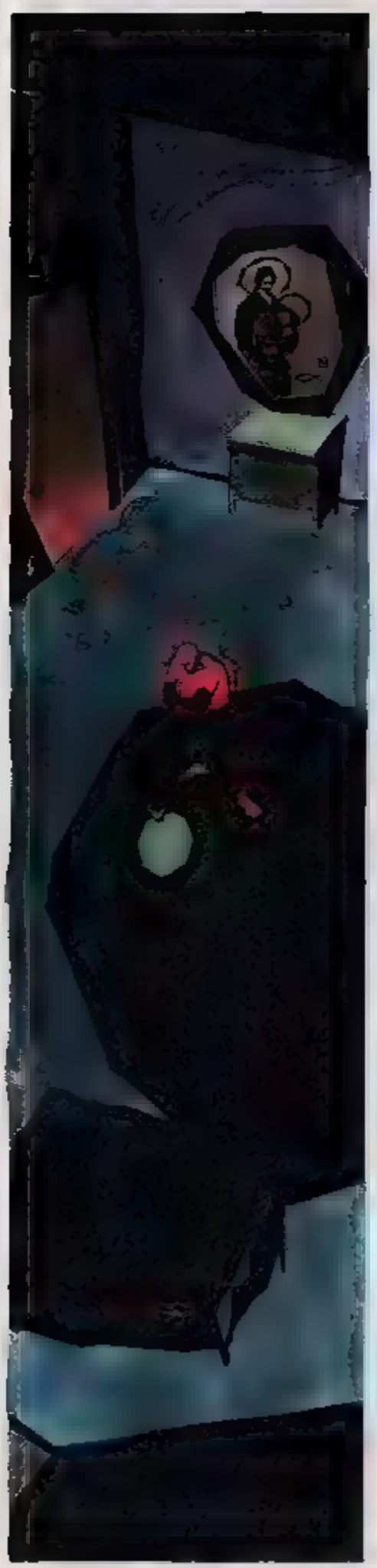
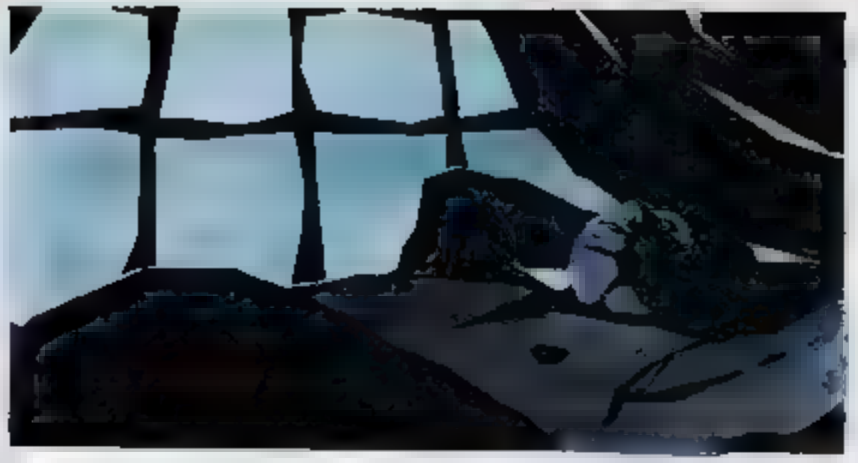
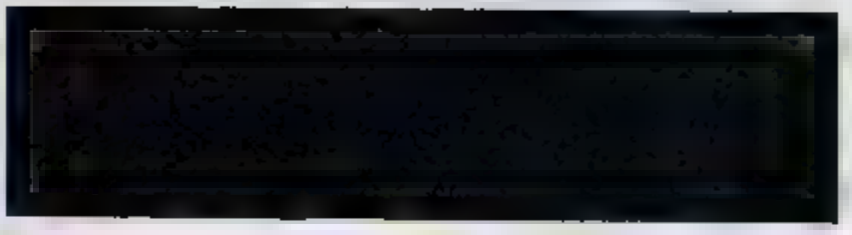






Mom & Dad,
I know it's been a long time but I'd like to see you. I've moved to N.J. and everything is fine if it's alright I'd like to see you both again. I'll be coming down sometime next week. Let me know if there's any problem with that.
See you soon.
Richard

ONE WEEK LATER...

('...SHE WOULD FREAK IF SHE SAW ME WEARING ANY OF THIS!')

('...THERE ARE...AH!')

(A LITTLE TIGHT, BUT THEY'LL DO!")

"HEY, REACH! SMART OUTFIT!"

"MAL! HOW DID YOU..?"

"BILLY TOLD ME! HE TOLD ME EVERYTHING! THANKS A LOT FOR SHARING THAT BREAD WITH US, DICK-CHEESE!"

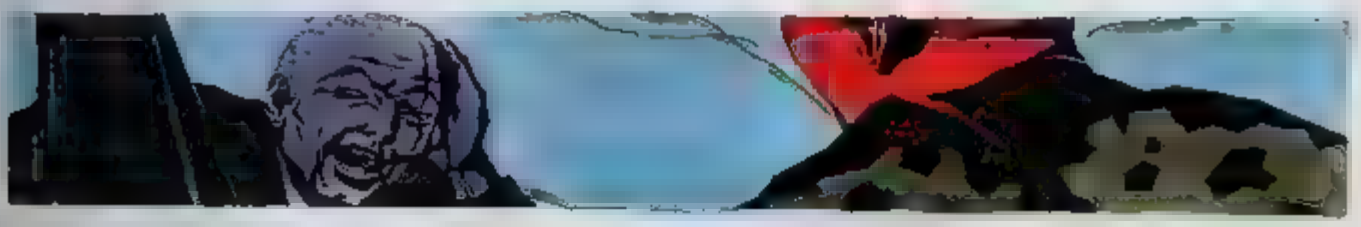
"WHERE'D YOU GET THE CAR?"
"THIS PIECE OF SHIT? I TRADED THE OTHER ONE AT A CHOP SHOP IN NEWARK!"

"AND WHERE'S BILLY?"
"BILLY! THAT KID IS REALLY FUCKED! I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BLUBBER SO HARD! HA!"

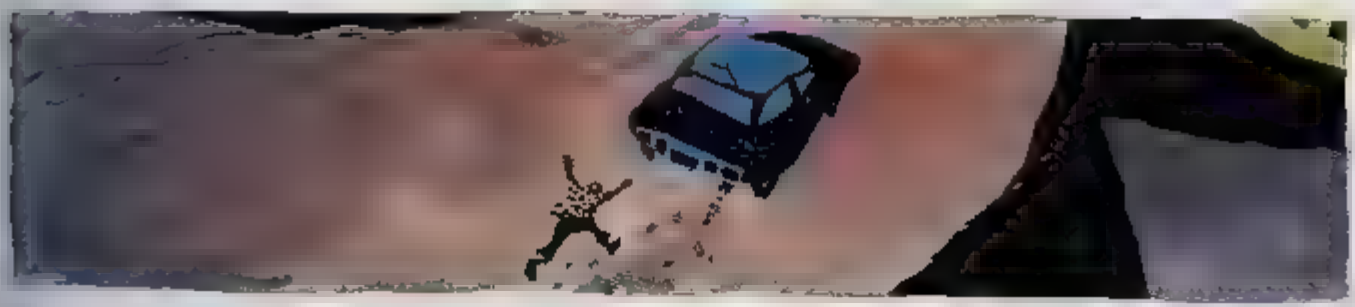
"WHY? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?"
"ME AND THE BOYS WERE HAVIN' SOME BREWS AT YOUR OLD PLACE! BILLY WAS REALLY SHIT-FACED!"
"SO?"

"HE HAD SOME CHICK NAMED CHLOE THERE AND HE WASN'T EVEN TRYING TO GET INTO HER PANTS!"
"OF COURSE NOT! SHE'S ——— "

"YEAH, BUT HE DID! HE'LL DO ANYTHING I TELL 'IM! HA HA! AND Y'KNOW, HE DIDN'T EVEN THANK ME! HE STARTED BAWLING LIKE A BABY!"
"YOU SON OF A BITCH!"



"SEE YOU LATER, REACH!"
"I'LL KILL YOU, MAL! COME BACK HERE!"



"I'LL KILL YOU. . . ."

"(I'M GONNA KILL 'IM. . .) ONE WAY"

"ARE YOU OKAY?"

"HEY. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?"

"YEAH. YEAH, I'M ALL RIGHT."
"HERE. YOU CAN DRY YOUR EYES WITH THIS."

"WHO ARE YOU, MY **MOTHER**? AND I WASN'T CRYING ANYWAY! I'VE GOT ....**ALLERGIES!**"

"I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. I HAVE TO TAKE MEDICATION FOR MINE."

"YOU CAN TALK TO ME IF YOU WANT TO. I'M GOOD AT HELPING PEOPLE WITH THEIR PROBLEMS——MUCH BETTER THAN SOLVING MY OWN!"

"OH, YEAH? WHAT THE HELL DO YOU KNOW? YOU'RE A TYPICAL SUBURBANITE—— PROBABLY LIVE AT HOME, HAVE A NICE LITTLE SPORTSCAR THAT YOUR PARENTS PAID FOR!"

"NO, I DON'T. DADDY WON'T LET ME DRIVE... AND... AND I DON'T LIVE AT HOME ANYMORE. I'VE RUN AWAY!"

"RUN AWAY? AREN'T YOU A LITTLE OLD TO BE RUNNING AWAY?"

"I DON'T THINK I WANT TO TALK TO YOU."

"WHAT'S THE MATTER? HIT A LITTLE TOO CLOSE TO HOME, EH?"

"YOU'RE REALLY SHALLOW, YOU KNOW THAT? YOU'RE JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE—— ONLY A DIFFERENT MONKEY SUIT, THAT'S ALL."

"OH, AND WHAT MAKES YOU SO SPECIAL?"

"NOTHING. I'M PROBABLY EVEN WORSE OFF THAN MOST. THAT'S WHY I TRIED TO KILL MYSELF THIS MORNING. YOU EVER TRY TO KILL YOURSELF?"

"NEVER."

"YOU'RE LYING. I CAN TELL WHEN PEOPLE ARE LYING. MY DADDY SHOWED——"
"OH? AND WHAT OTHER POWERS DOES YOUR FATHER HAVE?"

"MY DADDY IS A MINISTER! HE HAS A LOT OF POWER AND RESPECT FROM OTHER PEOPLE —— SOMETHING YOU WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT!"

"IF HE'S SUCH HOT SHIT, THEN WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY?"

"HE THINKS I'M A CHILD. I WAS SENT TO KANSAS FOR BIBLE CAMP THIS SUMMER."

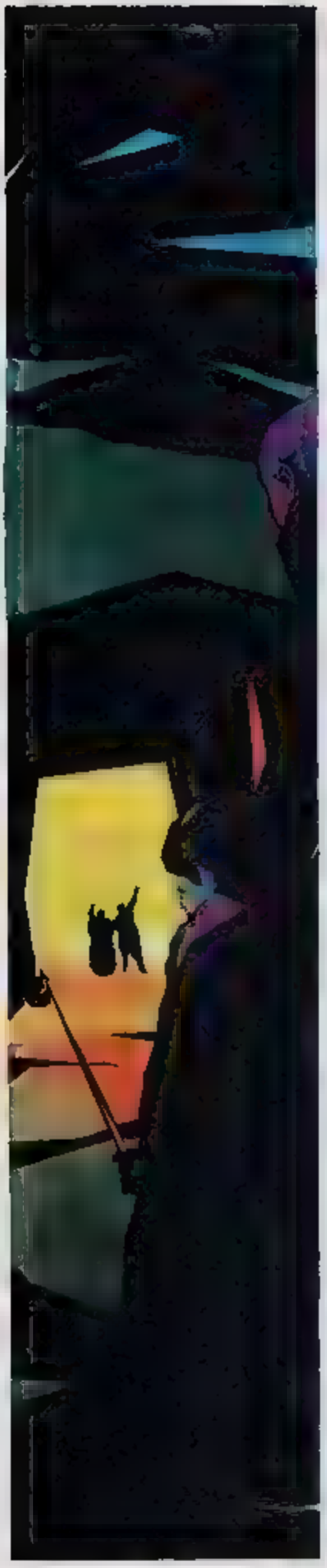
"THEY... THEY DID TERRIBLE THINGS TO ME! I HAD A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN! O-OUR DOCTOR PUT ME ON MEDICATION! IT WAS ONLY THE OTHER DAY THAT I FOUND OUT I'M SCHIZOPHRENIC! AND NOW DADDY WANTS ME TO GO BACK!"

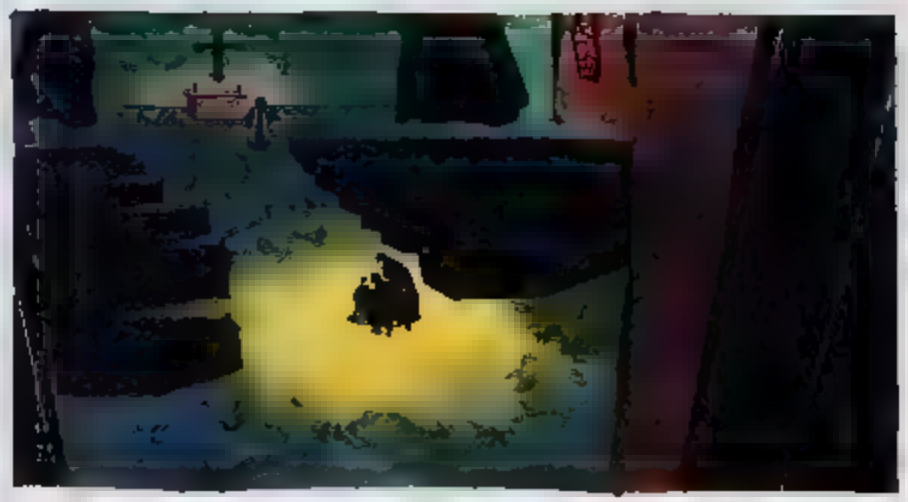
(OH, GOD, I'M SITTING NEXT TO A SPACE CADET!)

"WHERE ARE YOU GOING?"
"AWAY! I'VE GOT ENOUGH PROBLEMS OF MY OWN!"

"PLEASE! I NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO!"
"WILL YOU SHUT THE HELL UP? EVERYONE IS LISTENING!"

"BUT YOU'RE MY LAST HOPE! I'VE PRAYED AND PRAYED, AND NOTHING HAS HAPPENED! SOMETIMES IT'S SO HARD TO BELIEVE.. "





"...HARD TO BELIEVE..."

"LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BABBLING ABOUT, AND I DON'T WANT TO KNOW! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!"

"LAST STOP, PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL!"

(SO MUCH FOR MY GOING STRAIGHT! SHIT!)

"DAMN!"

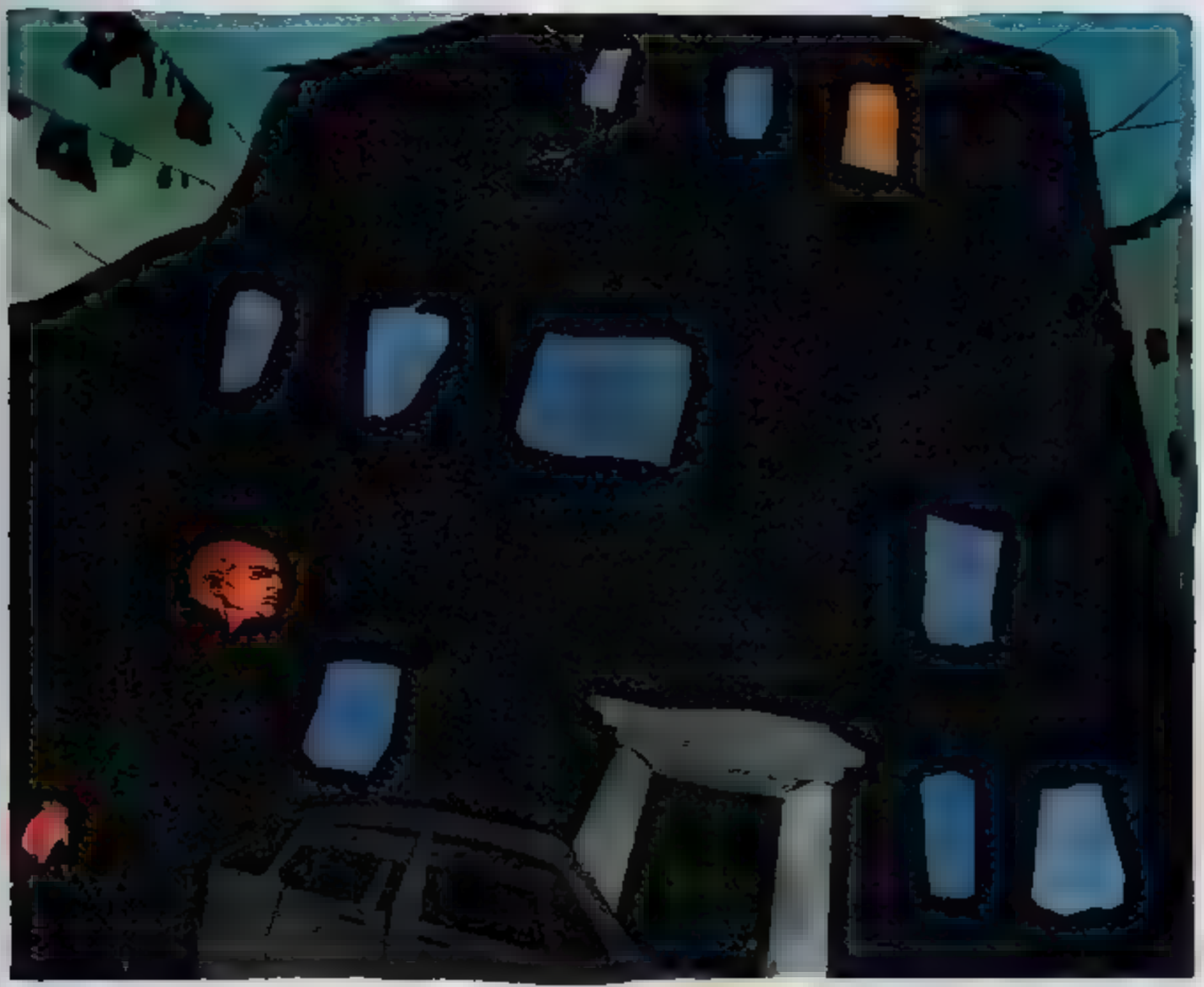
"DAMN!"

(NO. NO, I WON'T KILL 'IM. THAT'S NOT THE WAY...)

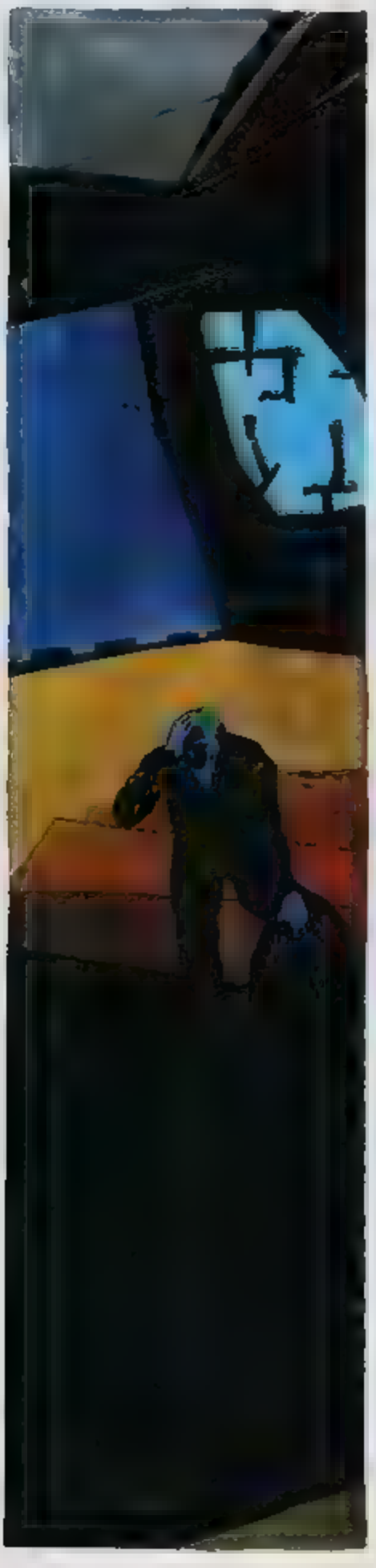
"HEY, KID! WAIT UP! HEY!"

"GONE! WHERE DID SHE. ?"

(NO. I'VE GOTTA DO THIS RIGHT/ GOTTA PLAY IT COOL/)



(SHIT! I WAS SUPPOSED TO SEE MY PARENTS! WHY DO I ALWAYS...)



(SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE YUKKING IT UP IN THERE...)

"MAL, I — BILLY!"

"I'M ALL RIGHT, REACH! WE'RE ONLY HORSING AROUND!"

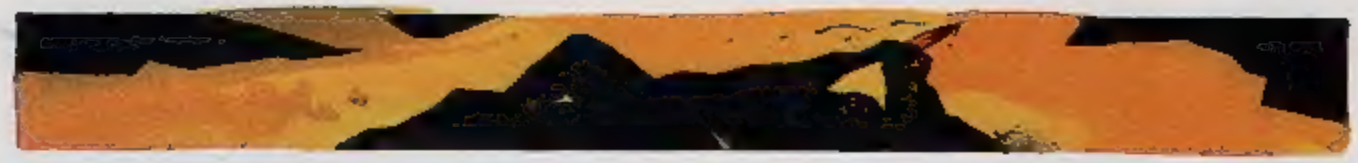
"THAT'S *RIGHT*, REACH! WE'RE ONLY 'HORSING AROUND'! SO WHAT THE HELL DO *YOU* WANT?"

"TAKE IT EASY, MAN! I ONLY CAME TO TALK!"
"YEAH? AND WHAT WAS ALL THAT 'I'LL KILL YOU' SHIT?"

"MAL, DON'T——"
"BILLY SAYS THAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO WATCH OUT FOR CHLOE! SOME FRIEND YOU ARE, REACH! BUT FROM THE LOOKS OF IT I'D SAY SHE WAS A GOOD LAY! WOULDN'T YOU SAY SO, BILLY?"

"YOU SON OF A BITCH!"

"OWWWW!"



"ASSHOLE...I——I WAS ONLY...JOKING...."

"SHIT, REACH! THAT'S HARD-CORE!"

"AAAAAARGHHH!"

"HA HA! HA HA HA!"

"REACH, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"

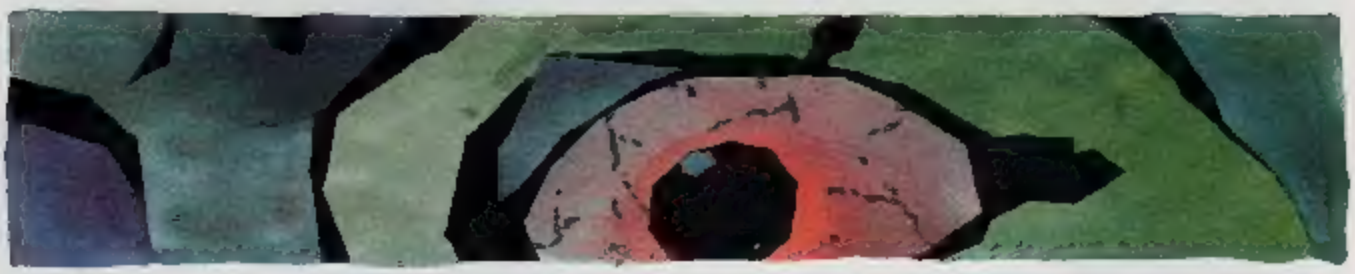
"WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE, DUMB ASS? WE'RE LEAVING!"

"BUT WHERE ARE WE GOING?"
"WHEREVER I FUCKING **FEEL** LIKE! AND KEEP YOUR HANDS OFFA ME!"

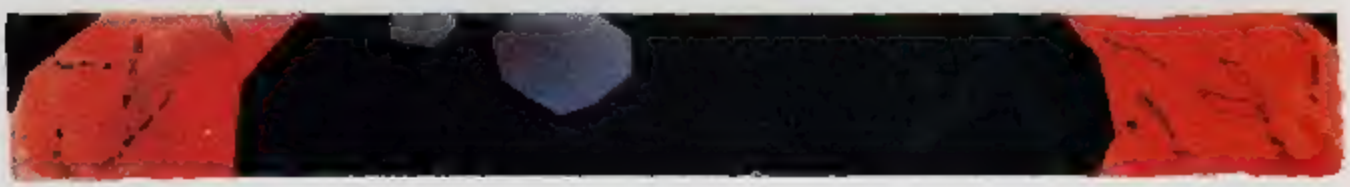
"REACH, CAN WE VISIT CHLOE? SHE'S STAYING WITH SOME FRIENDS IN KEARNY!"
"THAT WAS **GREAT**, MAN! YOU'RE A NATURAL!"

"REACH, **CAN** WE?"
"FUCKIN' **EXCELLENT**."
"YEAH, PRETTY COLD, BRO'! MAL HAD IT COMIN'!"

"IT WOULD ONLY TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO GET THERE!"
"YOU'RE THE **MAN** NOW, REACH!"



"WHAT DO YOU SAY?"



"REACH?"

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Skinheads

Leather, studs, and shaved heads. For some, it's just a fashion statement. But for others, it's a brutal, violent way of life. *Hardcore* explores this sometimes sordid world with an unflinching eye for honest detail.

Mal is the frequently unbalanced leader of a gang of skinheads. They survive on theft and robbery, and amuse themselves with vandalism and random violence. Mal's behavior becomes increasingly erratic, however, finally driving Reach, one of his trusted lieutenants, to leave the gang.

But Reach finds it more difficult to cut loose than he had planned. The sadistic Mal uses Billy, one of Reach's oldest friends, as a way of punishing Reach for his defection. The final confrontation between Mal, struggling to maintain his power, and Reach, struggling to break free, leaves no winners and few survivors.

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